

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 DOTE-00 INT-05 /082 W

----- 123634

O R 151848Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4247

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USEC BRUSSELS 1896

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: MADRID STRIKE SITUATION

REF: MADRID 0196

BEGIN SUMMARY: MADRID STRIKE WAVE CONTINUES AT SOMEWHAT DIMINISHED
LEVEL AMID RUMORS OF CONVOCATION OF NEW QTE GENERAL UNQTE STRIKE
ATTEMPT, JAN. 16.
END SUMMARY.

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1. MADRID STRIKE WAVE CONTINUES. IN METAL SECTOR ALL MAJOR FACTORIES

IN INDUSTRIAL SUBURBS OF GETAFE AND VILLAVERDE HAVE LOCKED OUT THEIR EMPLOYEES EITHER IN RESPONSE TO STRIKES OR OUT OF FEAR OF VIOLENCE OR INTIMIDATION. METAL WORKERS EITHER ON STRIKE OR LOCKED OUT NOW ESTIMATED AT 55,000. IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR, STRIKE ACTIVITY DECLINED CONSIDERABLY FROM JAN 12 HIGH POINT. WEEK HAS ALSO WITNESSED SUBSTANTIAL BUT INTERMITTENT STRIKES AMONG SOME 10-15,000 MADRID BANK EMPLOYEES, AT TELEPHONE COMPANY (ALTHOUGH THIS DISPUTE NOW APPEARS TO BE HEADING TOWARDS SETTLEMENT); AND AMONG 4,000 MAILMEN WHO STRUCK JAN 13 FOR FIRST TIME IN FORTY YEARS.

2. MAIL STRIKE CREATED MOST SERIOUS LABOR PROBLEM YET FOR GOVT SINCE MAILMEN ARE DIRECT GOVT EMPLOYEES PERFORMING AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE. GOVT RESPONDED WITH MOST VIGOROUS MEASURE YET, I.E. MILITARIZATION OF STRIKING WORKERS WHO WERE DRAFTED INTO ARMY JAN 14, WHICH MEASURE, ACCOMPANIED BY ARREST OF EIGHT LEADERS OF MAIL STRIKE, HAD DESIRED EFFECT OF ENDING STRIKE.

3. TO A LESSER EXTENT, SOME OTHER CITIES HAVE ALSO BEEN AFFECTED BY STRIKES AND LATER AGITATION, NOTABLY BARCELONA, WHERE THERE HAVE BEEN STRIKES OF PORT WORKERS AND WHERE AGITATION HAS STARTED AT GIANT SEAT AUTOMOBILE FACTORY, AND AT AVILES IN ASTURIAS WHERE ENSIDES A STEEL COMPLEX HAS RECENTLY BEEN PLAGUED BY STRIKES.

4. SEVERAL OF TRADE UNION LEADERS ARRESTED ON JAN 10 (REF) HAVE BEEN RELEASED ON PROVISIONAL LIBERTY, SEVEN OF THEM YESTERDAY. ACCORDING TO ONE WELL-INFORMED OPPOSITION LABOR SOURCE, ALL OF THOSE ARRESTED JAN 10 WERE MEMBERS OF SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE) EXCEPT ONE, WHO WAS A MEMBER OF CATHOLIC EXTREMIST ORT.

5. GOVT NEWS MEDIA HAVE ALLEGED THAT STRIKES AND LABOR AGITATION ARE PART OF A MASTER "SUBVERSIVE PLAN" OF CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS. WHILE AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION, HIGH DEGREE OF COORDINATION AND A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PREVIOUS PLANNING BY CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUP, MOST NOTABLY PCE-DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS, REPORTEDLY EXISTS AND THERE HAS BEEN A "GENERAL STRIKE" APPEAL FOR JAN 12 AS WELL AS ANOTHER SUCH APPEAL FOR JAN 16. THERE IS ALSO, HOWEVER, A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF SPONTANEITY AND IMPROVISATION. ACCORDING TO A CLANDESTINE LABOR SOURCE, SOME STRIKES HAVE INVOLVED SUBSTANTIAL PRE-PLANNING, CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCH AS THE SIT-INS AT THE TELEPHONE COMPANY, BUT OTHERS SUCH AS THE MAILMEN'S STRIKE, HAVE BEEN SPONTANEOUS AND UNEXPECTED.

6. A NUMBER OF TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS CAN BE MADE ABOUT THE MADRID STRIKE WAVE, I.E., A) WORST DAY TO DATE WAS JAN 12; B) GOVT HAS BEEN HANDLING SITUATION IN AD HOC MANNER, BUT RATHER ADROITLY, ALTHOUGH IT HAS HAD TO INCREASINGLY RESORT TO

A RESTRAINED USE OF FORCE AND SOME ARRESTS; C) THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT OF PROVOCATION AND TESTING OF GOVT BY CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS, AND THE PCE, AT LEAST, HOPES TO FORCE GOVT TO REACT HARSHLY ON ORDER TO TO CLAIM THAT NEW GOVT'S PROFESSED LIBERAL INTENTIONS ARE A FRAUD; D) EASE OF MAILMEN'S STRIKE IS SOMETHING OF AN EXCEPTION TO GOVT'S GENERALLY CAUTIOUS HANDLING OF STRIKES, BUT IS CLEAR WARNING GOVT WILL NOT TOLERATE STRIKES AMONG GOVT EMPLOYEES; E) GENERAL PUBLIC HAS NOT, TO DATE, RESPONDED TO APPEALS FOR ACTIVE SUPPORT OF STRIKERS, THUS CONFINING STRIKES TO SPECIFIC SECTORS AND GIVING CITY IN THE MAIN A "BUSINESS AS USUAL" ATMOSPHERE; F) FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN EACH STRIKE HAVE BEEN ECONOMIC, G) A HIGH DEGREE OF POLITIZATION OF MANY STRIKES HAS TAKEN PLACE ONCE STRIKES GOT UNDERWAY; H) THERE IS SLOW BUT STEADY PROGRESS TO A SOLUTION OF SOME OF STRIKES; AND E) MOST SURPRISINGLY, A COUPLE OF MOST CONSERVATIVE SSO WORKER LEADERS IDENTIFIED WITH THE "BUNKER", WHO FOR YEARS HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF MERELY FOLLOWING GOVT ORDERS HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY SEEKING TO LEAD SOME OF AGIOATION AFTER BEING PUSHED INTO THIS ATTITUDE BY REBELLIOKS WORKERS IN THEIR SECTORS.

7. SOME FACTORIES CURRENTLY CLOSED DUE TO STRIKE AND/OR LOCKOUTS MAY TRY TO REOPEN ON MONDAY. THERE IS RENEWED POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER SUBWAY STRIKE ON JAN 19 AS SUBWAY WORKERS STATED IF THERE IS INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS IN THIS WEEK'S NEGOTIATIONS THEY

WOULD STRIKE AGAIN ON THAT DATE. PROSPECTS ARE FOR ANOTHER WEEK TO TEN DAYS OF SUBSTANTIAL STRIKE ACTIVITY IN THE MADRID AREA BEFORE THE CURRENT STRIKE WAVE IS LIKELY TO RUN ITS COURSE. DECISIONS TAKEN BY TONIGHT'S SPECIAL CABINET MEETING IN RESPECT OF GOS POLICIES VIS A VIS THE STRIKE AND PUBLIC ORDER ISSUES WILL ALSO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FUTURE COURSE OF THESE DISPUTES.

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